

VZCZCXR00440

PP RUEHFK RUEHKSO RUEHNAG RUEHNH
DE RUEHKO #5290/01 3232256

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

P 192256Z NOV 07

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9639

INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEAWJA/USDOJ WASHDC PRIORITY

RULSDMK/USDOT WASHDC PRIORITY

RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J5//

RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI

RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CC/PA//

RHMFIUU/USFJ //J5/J021//

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 18 TOKYO 005290

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 11/19/07

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AMERICAN EMBASSY, TOKYO

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION

OFFICE OF TRANSLATION AND MEDIA ANALYSIS

INQUIRIES: 03-3224-5360

INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: otmatokyo@state.gov

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(1) Editorial: Avoidance of joint press conference a sign of the autumn of Japan-US relations

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 18, 2007

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The first summit meeting between Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and US President George W. Bush seems to have been held to prevent winter from falling on the Japan-US relationship. The Fukuda-Bush summit made us think that the summer that was the Koizumi-Bush era has passed, making way for bilateral relations to enter an autumn period.

It was symbolic that the two leaders did not hold a joint press conference, although they showed up before the TV cameras.

It is normal for pending issues to exist not just in Japan-US relations but in all international relations. Some issues are big; others, small. After checking into those issues, Foreign Ministry officials preparing for the summit decided to play up those areas on which the two countries have reached agreement.

The two top leaders or Foreign Ministry officials seem to have wanted to avoid minor differences coming up in a press conference because the two countries had areas where substantial agreement exist. They might have been concerned that if Fukuda and Bush answered questions at a press conference, gaps would emerge.

That indicates to us that there are serious issues in security relations, which are regarded as foundation of bilateral ties and always viewed as being good. Prime Minister Fukuda could not clearly spell out the prospect of refueling operations being resumed in the Indian Ocean. President Bush could not clearly state that the US would not de-list North Korea as a state sponsoring terrorism.

It is common for the US president, along with the top leader of another country, to answer questions at a joint press conference. It was quite unusual for the leaders of Japan and the US not to hold such a press conference. It has been the practice for the US president to hold a joint press conference with the Japanese prime minister since the first one took place in July 1991 in Kennebunkport between Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu and President George H. Bush.

In the summit in March 1990 in Palm Springs, Bush and Kaifu held no joint press conference. The reason reportedly was Kaifu had only 25 hours to spend in the US. However the two were criticized for not

having a press conference, because Kaifu swam in the pool after the summit, and differences in the respective briefings by US and Japanese officials emerged.

Early in the 1990s, the US administration was unhappy with Japan's contribution to the Gulf war. There was also friction over the Structural Impediments Initiative. Friction has remained endemic to the bilateral relationship.

Fukuda spent only 26 hours in Washington. He made the right decision to meet President Bush prior to his attendance at the East Asia summit. The fact that Bush and Fukuda did not hold a press conference means the relationship has returned to the state it was 17 years ago.

The prime minister and the president probably wanted to conceal the existence of differences in stances. When the US held summit meetings with France and Germany, the leaders revealed in their joint press conferences their affirmation to repair relations strained by the Iraq war. Is the US now downgrading its relations

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with Japan?

(2) Fukuda tells President Bush: "The government will make utmost efforts for swift passage of new antiterrorism bill

ASAHI (Top Play (Excerpts)
Evening, November 17, 2007

Shinji Inada, Washington

In their first meeting at the White House on the morning of Nov. 16, local time, Prime Minister Fukuda and United States President Bush confirmed the need for strengthening the Japan-US alliance. The prime minister promised to Bush that his government would make utmost efforts to pass the new antiterrorism bill designed to resume at an early date the Maritime Self-Defense's (MSDF) refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. The president expressed his expectations for the swift resumption of the MSDF operation. On issues with North Korea, the prime minister said: "It is important for Japan and the US to take joint steps in dealing with the North, including the issue of delisting North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism." The president said in reference to the issue of North Korea's past abductions of Japanese: "We will never let the issue be forgotten."

The Japan-US summit lasted for about one hour, with Secretary of State Rice and other government officials present. According to US government sources, Fukuda and Bush held a brief tete-a-tete meeting after the summit. Later, they held a joint press conference and then attended a luncheon, also joined by Defense Secretary Gates.

On the MSDF's refueling mission, Fukuda stressed great zeal to resume the operation, using this expression: "Early enactment of the bill." The fact remains, however, that it will be difficult to enact the bill unless the current Diet session, due to end on Dec. 15, is extended. In the House of Councillors, of which the opposition camp has control, discussion has yet to be started, though the bill cleared the House of Representatives. Bush in the press conference hailed the operations Japan has so far carried out as "very important contributions."

Fukuda and Bush also agreed on the need for close cooperation between the two countries to urge the North to scrap all its nuclear weapons and facilities. Regarding North Korea's status as a terrorism-sponsoring country, the Japanese government stopped short of disclosing what the two leaders discussed, "based on an agreement with the US," as said by a government source.

According to US government sources, however, Bush listed as conditions for his judgment on the delisting issue: (1) North Korea's disabling of its nuclear facilities; (2) the North's declaration of its nuclear development plans; and (3) the abduction issue. This indicates that although the president is giving consideration to the abduction issue, he does not regard a

settlement of the issue as a condition for taking North Korea off the US blacklist. There reportedly was no request from the prime minister in a direct way for the US to refrain from delisting the North before the abduction issue is resolved.

Bush told Fukuda: "I am aware that there is concern in Japan that the US might reach an agreement with North Korea, leaving the abduction issue behind." In the press conference, the president also

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remarked: "We will never forget the abduction victims and their families." In this respect, the US government sources explained that there is no change in the government's policy regarding the delisting issue and that the president's remark indicates an intention to continue to urge Pyongyang to settle the abduction issue.

On Japan's host-nation budget (the so-called sympathy budget), which the Japanese government is considering cutting despite the US' opposition to it, Defense Secretary Gates emphasized: "It (host nation support for the US Forces, Japan) is the most important policy item in Japan-US relations. The issue must be settled without fail." Fukuda replied: "I hope the issue will be resolved at an early date through thorough talks between the cabinet ministers concerned of the two countries." With respect to the issue of US force realignment, including the transfer of the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station, they confirmed that the two countries will steadily push ahead with the plan in accordance with the agreed roadmap.

(3) New antiterror bill: Question mark put to DPJ's counterproposal

SANKEI (Page 5) (Abridged)
November 17, 2007

The government has introduced a new antiterror bill to the Diet in order for Japan to resume its refueling activities in the Indian Ocean. Meanwhile, the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) is working out a counterproposal bill to prevent and root out international terrorism and assist with Afghanistan's reconstruction. In its outline, the DPJ's counterproposal expressly stipulates that Japan will send the Self-Defense Forces to Afghanistan. The DPJ also touches on the pending issue of what to do about the government-set standards for SDF personnel's use of weapons overseas. In this regard, the DPJ's bill contains something that can be seen as a step forward from the government's restrictive weapons use standards. However, the DPJ sets difficult preconditions for Japan to dispatch SDF troops. One defense source therefore wonders if the DPJ is really thinking of sending SDF members. The DPJ remains cautious about presenting its bill to the Diet because of its parliamentary strategy, or for some other reason. The party does not seem willing to challenge the government and ruling parties to debate with its own bill.

"Not on the sea but on the land" and "civilian assistance" are the catchphrases that adorn the DPJ's counterproposal. The government's new antiterror bill is aimed at resuming the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean at an early date. However, the DPJ emphasizes civilian assistance in Afghanistan. The DPJ-proposed measures include conducting humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, as well as sending the Ground Self-Defense Force for infrastructure construction.

The DPJ proposes improving Japan's weapons use standards, or the rules of engagement (ROE). The current standards, which were applied to GSDF troops sent to Iraq, restrict SDF personnel's use of weapons to their self-defense or their defense of those under their control.

The DPJ, in its counterproposal, allows SDF personnel to use weapons "if and when they unavoidably have to do so in order to deter resistance to Afghan reconstruction and assistance." This is

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believed to be in line with the United Nations' weapons use standards that allow UN forces to use weapons in order for them to eliminate those standing in their way when they are on duty.

Meanwhile, one of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's defense-related lawmakers has a question about the DPJ-set preconditions for sending SDF troops. This lawmaker said, "Their bill might actually contain something against sending the SDF."

The DPJ's counterproposal says Japan may conduct its activities in 1) an area that has reached a ceasefire agreement and 2) an area where Afghan civilians will not be affected. The second point can be taken as denoting a 'safe area.' However, one defense-related LDP lawmaker raised a question: "Its definition is vague. If we interpret it in a broad sense, we can't send the SDF. If it's something like what the government calls a noncombat area in Iraq, that's contradictory to the DPJ's criticism of the government."

Furthermore, an executive member of the DPJ's foreign and defense policy committee explained that the SDF's dispatch is premised on a ceasefire accord. "I don't know if our party wants to send the SDF or if our party does not want to do so," said one of the DPJ's middle-ranking lawmakers.

Another feature of the DPJ's counterproposal is that the DPJ has shelved Japan's participation in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and in logistical activities for ISAF. In October, DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa wrote an article for a monthly magazine. In his article, Ozawa clarified his view suggesting the need for Japan to participate in ISAF after the DPJ takes office. However, there were objections from within his party.

Also, even after improving the weapons-use standards, the DPJ's counterproposal does not allow the SDF to engage in the security of civilians working in Afghanistan. Accordingly, Japan will need to ask a foreign private-sector security company or a foreign country's armed forces to guard civilians.

Furthermore, the DPJ is not even expected to translate its counterproposal into a bill and present it to the Diet.

Main points from DPJ counterproposal

- ? Japan will restrict its activities to civilian activities including its participation in a provincial reconstruction team (PRT).
- ? Japan will send SDF personnel and civilians, including doctors and police officers, for agricultural and medical support, disarmament, and reforms in the area of public security.
- ? Japan will not send SDF combat troops and will limit its assistance activities to humanitarian and reconstruction activities or infrastructure construction.
- ? Japan will not participate in ISAF's antiterror mop-up operations and its logistical support.
- ? Japan will restrict its activities to an area where a ceasefire agreement has been reached or otherwise to an area where Afghan civilians will not be affected (safe area).
- ? SDF personnel will be allowed to use weapons if and when they unavoidably have to do so in order to deter resistance to their activities.
- ? Japan will establish a basic principle (basic law or permanent law) in order to send SDF troops overseas in conformity with UN

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resolutions.

- ? If there is a UN resolution, Japan will then consider participating in maritime interdiction operations, including refueling activities in the Indian Ocean.
- ? The legislation is to be enacted into a special measures law valid for a period of one year.

(4) Assistant Secretary of State Hill positive toward taking North Korea off US list of state sponsors of terrorism; Abductees' families ask US not to delist

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Full)

Evening, November 19, 2007

Assistant Secretary of State Hill, the US top envoy to the six-part talks to discuss North Korea's nuclear issue, on Nov. 15 met with Chairman Takeo Hiranuma of the parliamentary group on the abduction issue, Deputy Chairman Shigeo Iizuka of the Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea and several others. According to Hiranuma, Hill indicated a positive stance toward removing North Korea from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism, noting, "It is one means of eliciting concessions from that nation."

Holding a press conference after the meeting with Hill, Hiranuma said that Japanese participants during the meeting said, "North Korea is still continuing an act of terrorism, namely the abductions. The allegation of nuclear cooperation between Syria and North Korea has yet to be cleared up." They strongly asked Hill not to delist North Korea, noting, "If North Korea is delisted, it would be a major setback for the Japan-US alliance."

In response, Hill reportedly said, "I am not in a position of making the decision. President Bush has the authority to decide." Acting executive director of the parliamentary group on the abduction issue Hitoshi Matsubara indignantly said, "Mr. Hill avoided discussions on the issue, by stopping short of directly making a comment. It is very lamentable and regrettable."

Iizuka expressed his sense of alarm about a possible response to the issue by the US, noting, "We left Japan, saying that we would prevent the US from delisting North Korea, but our concern is still continuing." He pinned hopes on Prime Minister Fukuda directly calling on President Bush not to take North Korea off the US blacklist.

(5) Questions voiced about effectiveness of new system for immigration checks, including fingerprints, photos

ASAHI (Page 2) (Full)
November 19, 2007

A new system to require foreign visitors to be fingerprinted and photographed when they enter the country will be introduced at 27 airports and 126 ports across the nation starting tomorrow. Japan will be the second nation, following the United States, to fingerprint foreign visitors. The US introduced the requirement of fingerprinting, following the terrorist attacks on the US in 2001. But some question the effectiveness of the system, harboring the concern that human rights might be abused under it. The visit-USA program is said to be a model for Japan's new system, but defects in it have been pointed out.

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A senior Justice Ministry official said: "I think that if the terrorist attacks in the US had not occurred, this kind of law should not have been approved."

The government included the idea of establishing the new system in the action program it worked out to prevent terrorism following the 9/11 attacks. The revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law, which was submitted to the regular Diet session in 2006, was enacted, backed by such views as then Senior Vice Justice Minister Taro Kono's that "it's no time to be talking in such a leisurely fashion now that al-Qaeda reportedly is targeting Japan."

The Justice Ministry has developed an electronic scanning device that cost 3.6 billion yen. About 540 units will be installed at immigration facilities across the nation.

Previously, only those who had been taken into custody regularly in criminal cases were subject to the requirement of fingerprinting. It is estimated that about 8 million foreigners visit Japan annually. Of them, about 7 million visitors will likely be subject to the new immigration examinations. The scanned fingerprint data will be cross-checked against a blacklist on a database. The blacklist includes people who have been deported from Japan (about 800,000

cases) and suspected criminals on the police's wanted list (about 14,000 cases).

In the past, a senior al-Qaeda member had passed through Japan's immigration six times with a different person's passport over the four years until he was arrested in Germany in 2003.

A National Police Agency officer said: "If the system had been introduced, it would have been possible to block his reentries."

But Yoichiro Mizukami, a former head of the Tokyo Immigration Bureau, raises questions about the effectiveness of the new system, saying: "There little information in Japan about terrorists' fingerprints. I wonder how the scanned fingerprint data will be cross-checked. Japan should first establish a system to collect information on its own."

In actuality, the Justice Ministry itself seems to have hopes that the system will work effectively to reduce the number of illegal immigrants, rather than working as an antiterrorism measure. Those who had been once expelled from Japan but reentered the nation with a different person's passport totaled about 7,000 in 2006, accounting for about 13 PERCENT of all the deportees. It will become possible to prevent such persons from entering the nation due to the requirement of fingerprinting.

But Masashi Ichikawa, who has tackled this problem as a lawyer at the Japan Federation of Bar Associations, criticized the new system, remarking: "Is it significant to invest huge money in arresting overstaying foreigners? It would be impermissible to introduce any measures without proving their necessity, on the pretext of an antiterrorism measure."

(6) Asia and Japan-US alliance (Part 3): Fukuda diplomacy gets underway; synergy policy to be sent out; Koizumi-Abe policy to be repaired

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Excerpts)

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November 16, 2007

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda yesterday left for the US. Asked about the meaning of his first visit to the US as prime minister, he stressed, "I will strengthen and deepen Japan-US relations, which are important for the smooth promotion of our Asian diplomacy."

As soon as he returns home from the US on Nov. 19, he will leave for Singapore to attend a summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plus Three (Japan, China and South Korea) and the East Asia Summit and meet with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun. It means that he arranged his US visit before the already fixed Asia diplomacy schedule.

The past two administrations took pains to strengthen Japan-US relations, but their diplomacy toward Asia was strained because of Japan's view of wartime history, set off by former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine and further worsened by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's statement on the wartime comfort-women issue. Fukuda is aiming at rebuilding Japan's Asia diplomacy, based on the self-confidence way he has steadily made efforts to repair relations with Asian countries when he was chief cabinet secretary and a rank-and-file lawmaker.

When the national referendum law stipulating procedures for constitutional revisions was enacted, Fukuda along with former Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama visited various embassies in Tokyo, including the Chinese embassy, and explained, "There will basically no change in Japan's peace policy."

Even after resigning as chief cabinet secretary, he frequently attended various events and meetings in Asia. He established friendly ties with most Asian ambassadors to Japan, as one of his aides pointed out. Heightened expectations of Fukuda among Asian countries during the Koizumi and Abe administrations served as a factor to land him the premiership.

Defense Academy President Makoto Iokibe highly evaluated Fukuda's choice of the US as the destination for his first foreign trip, noting, "Since he is viewed as being strong in Asia diplomacy, he would have given the impression that he is an Asian expert, if he had chosen Asia."

Prime Minister Fukuda in his policy speech given in October advocated synergy (kyomei) of strengthening the Japan-US alliance and promoting Asia diplomacy. This is the phrase he himself created without advice from the bureaucrats.

In discussions with the Foreign Ministry, it was decided to use the word "synergy" instead of "resonance" as the interpretation for the word "kyomei", because synergy means interaction. One senior Foreign Ministry official explained, "If Japan and the US relations enjoy amicable relations and Japan and Asia also enjoy amicable relations, they would produce amplified results."

However, a blue print for how precisely synergy can be brought about has not yet come into sight.

Hilary Clinton, a promising Democrat candidate for the US presidential election, mentioned in an article on her foreign policy that China would become the most important bilateral relation for the US this century. There is the possibility that Japan's Asia

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diplomacy, which is supposed to resonate in harmony with the Japan-US alliance, could drift if the alliance ceases to be the axis of American foreign policy.

(7) Nuclear threat: Will nuclear proliferation be prevented? What would happen if US launches preemptive attack against North Korea

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Slightly abridged)
November 16, 2007

(The following is a simulation.)

"We confirmed that North Koreans responsible for developing nuclear weapons have contacted an Islamic-rooted terrorist group. There is the possibility that the North Koreans may sell nuclear weapons to the terror group."

Washington conveys the above top-secret information obtained by the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to the Prime Minister's Official Residence. The prime minister calls an emergency meeting of the Security Council and tells the participants: "If the North is found to have sold nuclear weapons to terrorists, the US will undoubtedly launch a preemptive strike." The prime minister also indicates that in such a case, Japan would become the target of North Korea's nuclear missile.

Following North Korea's nuclear testing in October 2006, the five other members of the six-party talks succeeded in persuading the North to agree to disable some of its nuclear facilities, including the nuclear complex in Yongbyon. Since the US began to take a policy of dialogue, however, Pyongyang has kept silent about its enriched uranium development program and existing nuclear weapons, the number of which reportedly is about 10.

Five days after the CIA intelligence is relayed to Japan, Japan and the US hold a meeting on joint operations at the Defense Ministry.

"On the day of the start of the war, the US military would fire guided missiles, such as a bunker buster, to strike underground missile launching sites, like Musudan-ri. The number of missiles to be fired in a day would total 4,000." a US military officer says in the meeting.

Irritated at this explanation, a senior Self-Defense Force officer interrupts the US officer, arguing: "Is it possible to prevent a missile launch with that number of guided missiles, five times more than the 800 used in the Iraq war?" North Korea has yet to complete a missile capable of reaching the US. The Rodong (with the range

estimated at about 1,300 kilometers), which targets Japan, was a mobile liquid propellant ballistic missile, but liquid propellant was replaced with solid propellant. In the case of solid fuel, it is difficult to detect a missile firing beforehand.

Seven days after the delivery of the information, the US Department of Defense spokesman, while showing photos taken by the spy satellite KH-11 of several Rodong missiles loaded on trailers, demands of the North: "Immediately abandon all nuclear weapons." In response, North Korea issues a statement of its Foreign Ministry reading: "We will send a crash of thunder against our arrogant enemy, who infringes on the autonomy of a nuclear power," indicating that the North would use nuclear weapons. The prime minister orders the Self-Defense Force to be ready to be mobilized to protect the

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nation.

The Aegis cruiser Kongou dispatched to the Sea of Japan with US aircraft carriers is carrying out intercept training. Although the intercept missile SM-3 system is highly credible, one vessel is capable of loading only eight missiles. All Rodongs are not nuclear missiles, but the Maritime Self-Defense Force has only 32 SM3 missiles, and there is no guarantee that they are capable of shooting down all incoming missiles. In preparation for a failure in intercepting incoming missiles, the surface-to-air PAC3 missile system is installed at Camp Ichigaya in Tokyo to defend the capital, with the target set at the western sky.

Ten days after the information was transmitted, the Arab TV station Al Jazeera airs an announcement that it claimed had been made several days before by the leader of an international terrorist group, reading: "We inform the US government that we have obtained nuclear weapons."

Of course, the above scenario is a fiction. But once North Korea passes its nuclear weapons into terrorists' hands, the US will undoubtedly launch a preemptive attack on the North. This is the worst-case scenario for Japan. On the assumption of (1) the death of leader Kim Jong Il and collapse of his regime, (2) completion of a ballistic missile capable of reaching the US, and other imminent steps toward a nuclear crisis, the Defense Ministry has been discussing the details of an action plan for the Self-Defense Force since North Korea conducted a nuclear test in October last year.

It is essential to have North Korea abandon its nuclear facilities and weapons by such diplomatic means as the six-party talks and the Japan-US alliance. But North Korea seems to be aiming at achieving the status of becoming a nuclear power like India and Pakistan.

US Secretary of Defense Gates has said: "Northeast Asia is one of the last regions where a nuclear-weapons clash could take place." Japan also has to deal with nuclear threats from China and Russia. The nuclear threat facing Japan has expanded far larger than we think.

(8) DPJ rejects LDP-planned schedule for Upper House deliberations on bills

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
November 16, 2007

Former Vice Defense Minister Takemasa Moriya's testimony yesterday under oath to the Diet named Finance Minister Fukushiro Nukaga and former Defense Minister Fumio Kyuma (as politicians who were wined and dined by a former executive of the defense equipment trading house Yamada Corp). The revelation will adversely affect the government and ruling parties ability to manage Diet affairs. The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ and Minshuto) will ask the ruling coalition to shed light on allegations against Nukaga and Kyuma, as a condition to start deliberations on the new antiterrorism special measures bill and other bills, aiming at gaining the initiative in the House of Councillors.

The ruling camp intends to enact the new antiterrorism legislation by Dec. 15, when the extended Diet session ends. The Upper House

Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense will be meeting on Tuesday and Thursday. The ruling coalition planned to hold deliberations on

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the legislation on Nov. 19 in an Upper House plenary session and start interpellations in the committee on Nov. 22.

The DPJ has taken a hard-line stance toward the ruling bloc's plan, in part because of the outcome of Moriya's testimony to the committee.

In a meeting today of the directors of the Upper House Steering Committee, the largest opposition party determined it would reject the ruling coalition's proposal of launching deliberations on the 19th and would not approve it until a debate on a bill to abolish the Iraq Reconstruction Support Special Measures Law is over.

Negotiations between the ruling and opposition camps have hit rocky ground over a schedule for deliberations on the Iraqi bill.

In yesterday's committee session, the DPJ proposed explaining the purpose of the measure on the 20th and beginning deliberations on the 22nd. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) suggested starting deliberations on the 20th. The DPJ turned down the LDP's idea, however.

In order to kill time until Dec. 15, the DPJ leadership has a strategy of letting the new antiterrorism bill die when the current session ends Dec. 15, by prolonging deliberations on the Iraq bill and summoning Nukaga and Kyuma to testify on the allegations.

DPJ Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Kenji Yamaoka pointed out in a press conference yesterday: "Actually, it has become difficult to carry out deliberations on the new antiterrorism bill before the end of the session."

A senior LDP Upper House member said yesterday:

"The fact that Moriya said in his testimony that Nukaga and Kyuma had been entertained is likely a timely offer for the opposition, which wants to delay deliberations on the new antiterrorism bill. A negative impact cannot be avoided."

One ruling coalition member said: "Under the present situation, it would be difficult to begin deliberations late this month on the new antiterrorism bill."

A senior LDP member expressed the intention of avoiding an impact on the Diet timetable, saying, "I wonder why Mr. Nukaga and Mr. Kyuma are forced to testify to the Diet just because they had been treated to dinner. It is enough for them to hold press conferences to explain."

A LDP source, however, said: "It is not good that the public takes it that the LDP is trying to cover up the allegations" if the party neglects the matter. There is a growing view in the ruling coalition that it will not be easy to arrange a Diet timetable during the remaining term of the session.

Expected main political events

Nov. 16, 2007 Prime Minister Fukuda holds summit with President Bush in US

Nov. 20 Summit of ASEAN Plus Three in Singapore

Nov. 21 East Asia summit in Singapore

Dec. 15 Extra Diet session ends

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Late December Government's draft budget approved

Jan. 16, 2008 DPJ convention

Jan. 17 LDP convention

Mid- or late-January Regular Diet session convenes

(9) "Suspicious party" directly hits the administration; Senior

government official says, "Why real names now?"

ASAHI (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
November 16, 2007

The names of two lawmakers came out from the mouth of former Administrative Vice-Defense Minister Takemasa Moriya during his second Diet testimony yesterday. Moriya specifically testified that Finance Minister Fukushiro Nukaga and Fumio Kyuma -- both former defense chiefs and belonging to the Tsushima faction in the Liberal Democratic Party -- had been present when he was being wined and dined by Motonobu Miyazaki, a former managing director of defense equipment trading house Yamada Corp. With the Moriya scandal expanding to engulf an incumbent minister in the Fukuda administration, the extended Diet session has now plunged deeper into chaos. Part of behind-the-scenes personnel connections over the defense industry has also come to light.

A pall over refueling assistance bill

In his testimony before a House of Representatives committee yesterday, Moriya at first simply said that former defense chiefs had been present when he was being wined and dined by Miyazaki, whetting the appetites of both the ruling and opposition parties. Moriya repeatedly refused to reveal the names of the lawmakers, saying: "I would like to refrain from naming names so as not to cause trouble for them." But continually pressed to specify the individuals, Moriya finally pointed to the two former defense chiefs.

The "sudden disclosure" dealt a double blow to the political community. It has cast a blight on the management of the business of the just-extended Diet. It could rock the entire Fukuda administration.

Throughout Moriya's Diet testimony, Nukaga stayed at the finance minister's office. As he came out of his office two hours after the testimony ended, Nukaga was surrounded by reporters, and he repeatedly said, "I have no recollection."

Scheduled to leave shortly for the United States, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda was also visibly upset. Reporters at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) asked Fukuda: "How are you going to respond to Finance Minister Nukaga?" In response, Fukuda said: "How? Well, I don't know if that is a problem. Since he is a cabinet minister, why don't you ask him questions (at a press conference)?"

The enactment of a refueling assistance bill is the top priority for the government and ruling parties during the extended current Diet session. They do not want another impediment at this time when there are no prospects for the House of Councillors to begin discussing the bill. Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura said in a press conference: "In view of accountability, I think people should go ask Mr. Nukaga many questions."

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It is unlikely that the matter will quiet down with Nukaga's explanation. That is because although the government and ruling coalition think there is nothing wrong with dining with other people, Nukaga has denied being wined and dined (by Miyazaki).

A Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) director of the Lower House Special Committee on Prevention of Terrorism last night conveyed to an LDP director his party's plan to demand Diet testimonies by Nukaga and Kyuma, adding, "In particular, Mr. Nukaga in an earlier committee meeting denied a meeting with Mr. Miyazaki." Nukaga in a Nov. 7 committee meeting explicitly said, "I have never been invited or entertained by Mr. Miyazaki."

The DPJ, the largest party in the Upper House, envisages submitting a censure motion depending on Nukaga's response. The fate of the refueling assistance bill is murkier.

The government and ruling bloc complied with the opposition camp's

call for Moriya's testimony on Oct. 29 by putting top priority on the bill's passage of the Lower House. But with the revelation of the names of the politicians, their plan to separate the Moriya scandal from the legislation has now fallen apart. An LDP lawmaker who once served as a cabinet minister noted gloomily: "This might result in a political crisis over Nukaga. How will that affect the budget compilation process? Things could go terribly wrong." A senior government official complained, "(Moriya) refused to name names at the Lower House. Why today?"

After Moriya's testimony, a senior New Komeito lawmaker said in disgust: "Why did he reveal the names of the politicians? I don't care if he falls from grace because of suspicions, but I surely don't want to see the legislation fall apart with him."

Japan-US defense personal ties come to light

The testimony yesterday offered a glimpse into the opaque defense personal ties between political, bureaucratic, and business circles, including the defense industry.

Moriya testified that the former defense chiefs who had wined and dined with Miyazaki were Kyuma and Nukaga. In addition, Moriya also revealed that such persons as Naoki Akiyama, an executive of the Japan-US Center for Peace and Cultural Exchange, and former US Defense Department Japan desk director James Auer (Director of the Center for US-Japan Studies and Cooperation at the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies) were also present at the party.

Led by former Defense Agency Director-General Tsutomu Kawara, the membership of the Japan-US Center for Peace and Cultural Exchange includes ruling and opposition party defense policy specialists, such as Kyuma and former DPJ President Seiji Maehara, Japanese defense industry executives, and US defense specialists, such as former Secretary of Defense William Cohen. In a way, it is an organization linking Japanese and US political circles to the defense industry. Yamada Corp. President Yoshihiko Yonezu, who testified before the Upper House Foreign Relations and Defense Committee yesterday as an unsworn witness, also serves as a director of the center.

One of the main figures at the "exchange center" is Akiyama, who is known as the "fixer" in that world. Akiyama, who was once close to

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the late LDP Vice-President Shin Kanemaru, is said to have strong connections with former Keiseikai members. Moriya testified yesterday that Akiyama had invited him to the meeting with Kyuma and Miyazaki, saying, "I am going to drink with the minister. Why don't you come over?"

The center annually holds the Japan-US Security Strategy Conference during the consecutive holidays in early May in the United States and in the fall in Tokyo. This May, Nukaga led the US tour.

Such lawmakers as Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba and Maehara were absent from the conference held in Tokyo earlier this month. Nevertheless, the conference received a video message from Kyuma, now hospitalized, in which he said touching on the Maritime Self-Defense Force's withdrawal from the Indian Ocean, "The view was dominant that the Japanese government was at the beck and call of the United States."

Although Kawara explained the purpose of the conference was to conduct exchanges transcending the political, bureaucratic, academic, and business boundaries, some have pointed out that it is a breeding ground for collusive ties (among those circles).

Moriya also described Auer, who had been present at the meeting with Nukaga, as one of the persons introduced by Miyazaki, whom he came to know 23 years ago, saying, "You should also get to know persons from abroad." Yamada President Yonezu also testified yesterday that his company was in contract with a consultancy run by former US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage.

Although his testimony offered a glimpse into defense interests involving Japanese and US political circles and the connected defense industry, Moriya did not reveal what had been discussed at the meeting, saying, "I don't remember anything."

"The Defense Ministry has been hit by scandal after scandal regarding defense interests. Doesn't that mean the ministry has structural problems, such as the defense industry and huge interests and collusive ties between political, bureaucratic, and business circles?" LDP lawmaker Ichita Yamamoto asked Moriya yesterday. In response, Moriya said, "Our organization is not like that at all."

(10) Defense Ministry goofs again, panicked with misinfo: "Missile fired at Japan"

SANKEI (Page 3) (Full)
November 17, 2007

The Defense Ministry got into a panic yesterday with misinformation about the South Korean military's test-launching of a missile into the Yellow Sea west of the Korean Peninsula. US Forces Japan informed the Defense Ministry of the missile test. This information, however, was mistaken.

According to Defense Intelligence Headquarters (DIH) sources, South Korea launched a missile at 10:45 a.m. on Nov. 16. The sources said that the missile was targeted at pre-announced Yellow Sea waters situated west of its launching site, and that the missile landed there as planned.

The DIH reported the missile's test launch to Joint Staff Office divisions. In that process, however, this information was mistakenly

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conveyed. It said, "The missile was launched "in the south direction (Japan)." The JSO, with its tensions running high at a stroke, was driven to check and see if it was true, according to the sources.

Someone in the JSO suspected that there was something wrong within the South Korean military. However, it soon turned out to be misinformation resulting from a simple mistake in communication, the sources said.

(11) Is N-flattop really safe?

ASAHI (Page 35) (Abridged)
November 9, 2007

Fumiaki Sonoyama, Asahi Shimbun

The USS George Washington, a US Navy nuclear-powered aircraft carrier named after the first US president, will arrive at the US Navy's Yokosuka base in August next year for deployment. She is the first nuclear flattop to be homeported at a base in Japan. Her deployment to Yokosuka means that nuclear reactors with generating capacity equivalent to that of an atomic power plant will be floating just a little way from Japan's metropolis at all times. Is she really safe?

In late October, the USS George Washington, after her yearlong renovation, was plowing through the waves of West Atlantic waters on a vital training mission for her future deployment to Japan. Next spring, the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier will set sail for Japan from Norfolk, Virginia, where she is currently homeported. The carrier is loaded with two nuclear reactors, which are of the pressurized-water reactor type. Each of her two reactors has a thermal power generating capacity of estimatedly about 600,000 kilowatts. The two reactors' combined power output is well over that of Mihama Nuclear Power Plant's Reactor 1 (1,031,000 kW). She is really a floating atomic power plant.

"We have excellent technologies, facilities, training programs, and operating procedures," said US Navy Capt. Dave Dykhoff, the commanding officer of the USS George Washington. The commander was on the bridge. "That's why," he proudly went on, "we've never caused any reactor accident for over 50 years."

There are no records to show that US nuclear-powered warships brought about reactor accidents or major radiological contamination in the past. The US Navy ruled out the possibility of such events, asserting that it is "extremely inconceivable."

The US Navy says there are four safeguards to keep radioactivity inside its nuclear-powered warships should something happen to their reactors. One is their fuel itself, which is solid metal that can withstand strong shocks. Furthermore, radiated primary cooling water does not leak out of a completely welded vessel. Moreover, nuclear reactors are housed in robust components. The fourth and last barrier is the strong hull of nuclear-powered warships, according to the US Navy.

Recently, however, there was an incident that rocked the reliability of US nuclear-powered warships. The captain of the USS Hampton, a nuclear-powered submarine homeported in San Diego, was relieved of his commanding duty because of "a loss of confidence" in his leadership. According to a local news report, sailors on the

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submarine failed to do daily safety checks on the sub's nuclear reactor and falsified records to cover up the omission. However, Cdr. William Silkman, an officer in charge of the USS George Washington's nuclear reactors, stressed: "Our internal check system functioned, so the problem was discovered and appropriate action was taken."

There is no knowing details about the reactor's structure or its operating procedures. These are heavily veiled for military superiority. In the case of atomic power plants in Japan, the Japanese government can inspect them for safety under the Nuclear Reactor Regulation Law. However, a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier's reactor is untouchable.

There was also an event that bears it out.

In September last year, when the USS Honolulu, a US Navy nuclear-powered submarine, called at Yokosuka, a slight amount of radioactive substances was detected in waters near the nuclear submarine.

At that time, the US military denied the discharge of radioactive substances from the USS Honolulu as a result of its own survey. Meanwhile, an expert panel of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) released a report, saying: "We cannot rule out the possibility of such radioactive substances having leaked out of the nuclear submarine. However, we also cannot categorically determine that the radioactive substances leaked out of the nuclear submarine." With this, the MEXT panel avoided reaching a conclusion even without embarking on the USS Honolulu.

A group of Yokosuka citizens called for disclosing the USS Honolulu's logbook and her reactor operating records. However, the Japanese government did not ask the US government to provide data.

In 1968, the USS Enterprise first visited Japan. Since then, US nuclear-powered flattops have made a total of 13 port calls in Japan, arriving at Yokosuka or Sasebo. They used to anchor off shore and stay for several days. The USS George Washington, unlike their port calls, will be homeported in Yokosuka, so she will be berthed there for a total of about six months a year.

Late last year, a group of Yokosuka citizens and others opposing the USS George Washington's deployment to Yokosuka called for a poll of local residents on her deployment to Yokosuka. The anti-homeporting group collected signatures from 37,858 citizens or 10.64 PERCENT of the city's voting population. The group collected more signatures than those from the minimum number of voters required by law to request a local referendum. The city's assembly voted down the request with a majority of votes against it, stating: "The aircraft carrier issue, on which the city has no decision-making authority, is inappropriate for a poll of residents." However, local misgivings will never die out.

(12) Gas fields in East China Sea: Government sounds out China over development on Japanese side of median line as well: "If Japan test-drills, China will dispatch warships," says Chinese side

SANKEI (Page 1) (Full)
November 17, 2007

Sankei Shimbun learned on Nov. 16 that regarding a plan for Japan

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and China to jointly develop gas fields in the East China Sea, the Japanese government had put out a feeler to China, noting that it would approve joint development in part of the Japanese side of the median line, provided that China accepts joint development in an area straddling the median line, including Shirakaba (Chunxiao in Chinese). The Japanese side categorically made this proposal to China at a bureau director-level meeting on the 14th. In this connection, it was also found that when a Japanese negotiator hinted at the possibility of test drilling due to the stalemate in the talks, the Chinese side said that if the Japanese side does that, the Chinese Navy will dispatch warships.

The government had thus far called on China to jointly develop gas fields on the Chinese side of the median line, ruling out joint development on the Japanese side of the median line, because it is within Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

The Japanese side during the talks also conveyed its policy of excluding areas around the Senkaku Islands, claimed by China, and areas around the continental shelf belonging to Japan and South Korea, from joint development.

The government has decided to approve joint development in part of the Japanese side of the median line, motivated by the desire to elicit concessions from China with a soft approach, thereby securing concrete results when Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, who is said to be strong in Japan-China relations, visits China for the first time as prime minister, as a Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP) source put it.

Under such circumstances, Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura on the 16th met with Chinese Ambassador to Japan Cui Tiankai at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei). He conveyed the government's intention to settle the joint development issue by the time the prime minister visits China. Coordination is now underway for the prime minister to visit that nation as soon as the end of this year. Ambassador Cui said, "China has the sincerity and resolution to jointly make efforts to settle the issue at an early time in an appropriate manner."

It was confirmed in the Japan-China joint statement, released when Premier Wen Jiabao visited Japan this April, that both countries would compile a report on concrete measures to launch joint development by the fall of this year."

If the two countries reach an agreement on areas subject to joint development, they will sign a bilateral agreement that stipulates that they put on hold drawing a demarcation line in the said areas for a certain set period of time, respectively shoulder 50 PERCENT of the cost of development, and go fifty-fifty on the right to natural gas produced. However, the Chinese side insists that the area in dispute is between the Japan-China median line and the Okinawa trough.

(13) TOP HEADLINES

Asahi:

Widespread padding of local election expenses angers citizens, some leading to lawsuits

Mainichi:

Food price hikes looming amid shortages on international grain

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market

Yomiuri:

Poll: Only 4 of 47 prefectures say they can reach government's goal of 50 PERCENT cancer screenings

Nikkei:

Government to streamline depreciation rules to reduce corporate tax accounting cost

Sankei:

2 million people facing crisis due to subprime loan fiasco

Tokyo Shimbun:

DPJ-supported Hiramatsu wins Osaka mayoral election

Akahata:

70 PERCENT of Japanese temples support Article 9 of the Constitution

(14) EDITORIALS

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(1) Proposals for hopeful society: Residents' power can change communities

Mainichi:

(1) Don't make light of reform of National Consumer Affairs Center

(2) It is not too late for Japan to approve treaty to ban cluster bombs

Yomiuri:

(1) Revision of Immigration Law: Use fingerprints, photos to boost security

(2) Ban on counterfeit goods: Treaty without China's participation meaningless

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(2) Osaka mayoral election: Reform should be continued

Tokyo Shimbun:

(1) Thoughts at beginning of week: Restore labor environment that we can appreciate

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(1) Japan should take the lead in drafting a treaty to ban cluster bombs

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